



# Q & A on:

## Free Online Tax Preparations

*by Senator Tom Harkin*

### **Q: When are my taxes due?**

With the beginning of each year comes the time to file taxes. This year, taxes are due on April 17, 2012.

### **Q: Can I file for free through the IRS?**

Yes. Starting January 17, 2011, the IRS opened their Free File Program. This tax preparation program allows you to go online, file your taxes, and receive tax credits and deductions—all at no cost to you. The program, which began in 2003, offers low-to-moderate income earners access to leading commercial tax preparation software that assists in the tax filing process for taxpayers with a total 2011 Adjusted Gross Income of \$57,000 or less.

If you do not meet the income requirements for Free File, the IRS also offers an e-file option.

### **Q: What about my Iowa income taxes?**

There is a similar program for State of Iowa income taxes that can be found at <http://www.iowa.gov/tax/>.

### **Q: Where can I find Free File?**

After you gather your tax information, go online to <http://www.freefile.irs.gov/> for directions.

### **Q: What materials do I need to use the Free Online Tax Preparation?**

You will need a computer, internet access, and your personal tax information-including your Social Security number.

### **Q: What are important dates, and is the program safe?**

Free File opened January 17, 2012 and is available until taxes must be filed on April 17, 2012. The service is secure and your privacy is protected.

### **Q: What are the benefits of using the IRS Free File Program online?**

Sending tax forms electronically reduces the chances that important documents are lost in the mail and in many cases, could mean you receive your return faster. With computer filing through the IRS or the Iowa Department of Revenue, in comparison to privatized firms, refunds usually come far faster, and with no fee.

### **Q: Are other free resources available?**

The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) Programs offer free tax help for taxpayers who qualify. There are over 20 service locations in or very near Iowa. Locations can be found at <http://www.irs.gov/localcontacts/index.html>.

### **Q: Where can I find more information?**

For more information, please visit [www.freefilealliance.org](http://www.freefilealliance.org), contact one of Free File's offices found at <http://www.irs.gov/localcontacts/index.html> or any my offices <http://harkin.senate.gov/>.